

# M G A W

September 2001

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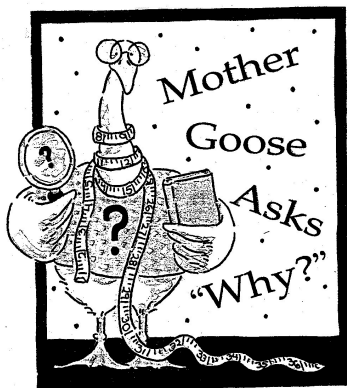
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Feature Book

Priscilla Tremblay, Editor

VISTA Assistant

*This newsletter is created and distributed by the Office of Library and Information Services  
in partnership with Rhode Island Reads*



## Remarks: RI State Coordinator

Melody Lloyd Allen

It is now time for the goslings to leave the nest. The 16 *Mother Goose Asks "Why?"* sites around the country must come out from under the protective wing of the Vermont Center for the Book and the soft nest provided by the National Science Foundation. Year Three of the grant period has ended, and we move ahead on our own.

Here in Rhode Island, the MGAW team remains intact, although Kathy Ryan has retired from her position at the Newport Public Library and will be freelancing as a trainer and a consultant. We are delighted to have a new VISTA member based here at OLIS. Priscilla Tremblay began her service period in mid-July and, among other duties, takes over as editor of our two newsletters – this one for librarians and agency partners involved in the *Mother Goose* Programs and one for parents and childcare providers who have completed a *Mother Goose* series.

In Year Three, we had 38 libraries and agency partners serving low-income communities offer 16 MGAW series to 162 parents and providers. 5% were African American,

31% were Hispanic, and 1% were Asian American. One series for providers was presented in both English and Spanish.

For this year, we have planned three training sessions. On October 15, the MGAW team for the third year in a row will offer an all day training session for *Mother Goose Asks "Why?"* program leaders. Both librarians and agency partners are invited. On November 5, the Head Start staff who have been trained by the Vermont Center for the Book folks in *Mother Goose Meets Mother Nature* will provide a day long training session for librarians. Many thanks to Lynn Murphy of Child Inc. for organizing this program. Finally, on March 25, the MGAW team will present an all day training session on *You Can Count on Mother Goose*. Team members will be running YCCoMG series for parents and providers during the fall and early winter to gain a firsthand perspective on this new *Mother Goose* Program. The training will be held at the Providence Public Library in conjunction with the travelling exhibit, "Go Figure."

We hope all the other *Mother Goose* sites will have a wonderful year!

## Conference Highlights from the MGAW TEAM

Joseph Morra and Cheryl Space share their exhilarating experiences from the *You Can Count on Mother Goose* Conference in Washington, D.C.

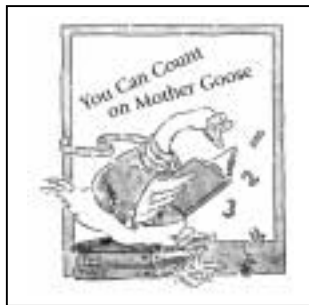
### JOSEPH MORRA Librarian/Resource Assistant CHILDSPAN

Math was always a breeze for me as a child. It was fascinating how numbers worked with one another or even against one another. Interestingly, as I grew older, math became more difficult for me as words were introduced alongside the numbers. Knowing that *YCCoMG* focused on teaching 3 - 7 year olds, my mindset going into the national was, "This conference will be great! All numbers, no words! I'll be a star here!" What a wakeup call I received over the next few days! From our first activity of how to turn over a "raft" without jettisoning into shark-infested waters any of my nine colleagues, to the last activity of building symmetrical and asymmetrical mobiles, I was stunned by the importance of language and communication in the world of mathematics. Some key ideas that I learned:

- \* In the "Shapes" session, it was asked whether language can sometimes get in the way of how shapes are "labeled." For example, we define "DOOR" by how we use it, but essentially it is a rectangle, and a child may view this "DOOR" as a rectangle and nothing more. It would make sense then to define an object by its shape initially, then move on to its actual name and use.
- \* Visualizing concepts as a child would, using words like "flat" and "solid" instead of "two- or three-dimensional," respectively, is essential. We must be aware of mathematics being an abstract representation of concrete ideas. As such, our goal as educators is to facilitate the ideas of math through clear and concise language.
- \* Pre-assessing the individuals in your group is important, for it gives you an

idea of their math knowledge. Starting with a question such as, "What words do you associate with math?" you can note if their replies are more commonplace (add, subtract, multiply, divide) or more in-depth (probability, correspondence, classification). By asking providers, "What materials in your program enhance or encourage math?" you can see if innovative or hands-on materials are being used, or if their approach to math is ditto and flash card oriented. *YCCoMG* is an exhilarating program – math through language, hands-on activities, literature, and FUN. Flash cards have never looked flimsier.

- \* Math is like poetry, comprised of specific words that define its core concept, but laced throughout with discovery and challenge!



### CHERYL SPACE Children's Librarian Providence Public Library

The sharks are circling the raft, and they are very hungry. Unfortunately, half of the raft has been punctured and the directions to repair it are on the bottom. What is a group of floating librarians to do? The raft must be flipped and repaired immediately - without losing any toes to the circling sharks. At the National *You Can Count on Mother Goose* training ten of us, crowded on a camping tarp in the middle of the "Hyatt" Sea, had to work cooperatively to solve our "problem." It was fun, and it was mathematics! Problem solving is the thread that weaves through all of the *YCCoMG* workshops. It turns out that language, conversation, asking questions and communication are at the core of mathematics, too - just like science.

The other four workshops are patterns and relationships, numbers and counting, shapes and spaces, and measuring. Each features children's books that relate to the mathematics standards written by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Here is a sample highlight from each of the four sessions:

- \* In *Jonathan and His Mommy* by Irene Smalls, a loving mother and her son take giant, zigzag, slow-motion and crisscross steps, hop, hop, hopping their way around the city on a sunny afternoon. After sharing this story and trying out the walking patterns in the book, parent and child can have lots of fun inventing steps and naming them. Then, why not put the walks together into a pattern and make up a crazy dance?
- \* In *Ten Minutes till Bedtime* by Peggy Rathmann, 10 hamster children and their parents are the first to arrive at a young boy's house to take the 10minute bedtime tour advertised on the internet. The illustrations are rich with fun details - and upon closer observation each of the numbered hamster children takes on a personality of his/her own. Parents and children will need sharp eyes to play hamster hunt. The goal is to find each of the ten hamster children on each page and turn over the matching number card included in the math kit (#1-10). Can they be found in order?
- \* After reading *Taking a Walk-Caminando* by Rebecca Emberley, families will have lots of fun walking around their own neighborhoods and finding and sketching the shapes hidden there to make a family shape book.
- \* In *Inch by Inch* by Leo Lionni, a young inchworm saves himself by proving he is useful - he can measure things! Parents and children will enjoy making their own flexible measuring tool using a pipe cleaner and inch long straw pieces. Then, they can measure the flamingo's neck, the heron's legs and the toucan's beak - just like the measuring trickster. The flexible ruler can be used all over the house to measure objects that are not flat. Just as in *Mother Goose Asks "Why?"* activities in *YCCoMG* do not require many materials, just a desire to share a great book and play with mathematical ideas.

## MGAW Sites Across The Country

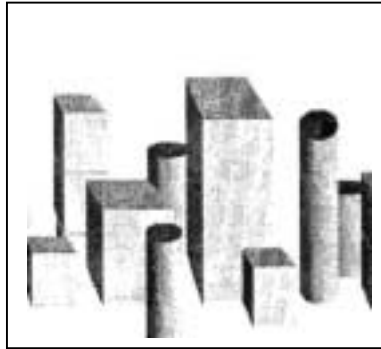
Rose V. Treviño,  
Children's Services Coordinator  
San Antonio Public Library  
<http://www.sat.lib.tx.us>

Kids in San Antonio are making predictions, observing and experimenting now more than ever thanks to a program first introduced in 1998. *MGAW* gives parents a way to see how much fun science can be, and how reading is a good tool for teaching basic science process skills. As much as we try, one agency cannot do it alone and for this reason, the success of *MGAW* depends on the partnerships established with agencies who work with low income families. We have formed strong partnerships with the following agencies who are reaching the targeted audiences with us: Smart Start for Teachers, Catholic Charities, Methodist Healthcare Ministries, KLRN-TV, Harlandale ISD - Head Start, Judson ISD- Even Start, Family Service Association and the City's Department of Community Initiatives. Several *Train the Trainer* sessions have been scheduled and a total of 128 people are trained to date.

In 2000, the City of San Antonio announced a new initiative called Kinder Readiness whose goal is to partner childcare centers to elementary schools in close proximity to one another. Parents of children in all 12 pilot sites had to buy into the program and attend workshops to help them help their children. *MGAW* became an important component of Kinder Readiness. It is through this program that parents will learn how to help their children succeed in school. We are excited that *MGAW* is a perfect fit!

### Best Wishes

Best of wishes to Rose Treviño, who retired on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2001 from the San Antonio Public Library where she was employed for over 20 years. We wish you all the best that life has to offer, Rose. You're sure to be missed.



## Family Literacy Forum

Melody Lloyd Allen

In March, I was fortunate to join AmeriCorps Site Coordinators from the Eastern US for a LEARNS In-depth Education Training sponsored by the Corporation for National Service. It was an exceptionally well planned two days packed with valuable information on helping children to become readers. Many thanks to the presenters from LEARNS at the Bank Street College of Education and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Check out the many resources at their website:  
<http://www.nwrel.org/learns>

While primarily geared to tutoring programs, the material is relevant for libraries and library programming. Here are some connections I found between their information and the *Mother Goose* Programs:

- Children need to become problem solvers, and both programs emphasize modeling strategies that families can use.
- Even in doing math, you can ask, "How did you do that?" Is there another way to do that? Would it work if you changed...?"
- Conversations extend language development so talking about what's going on in a book being read aloud is not an interruption but an opportunity.

- An illiterate parent can help a child to develop into a reader through sharing of an oral heritage of storytelling, encouraging curiosity and questioning, and valuing attitudes about learning, perseverance and confidence.
- Reinforce language development through various modalities including music, arts, dance, drama, and rhyming—even science and math!
- Making meaning arises from the authentic experiences of hands-on child-directed activities.
- Help children to make connections between a book and their life experiences, between books with similar themes, and between a book and a universal concept.
- Making predictions is common to reading and science.
- Finding patterns is common to reading and math.

## WEBSITES

Web Sites to Wander!!!!

<http://www.ala.org/alsc/>  
American Library Association.  
info on book awards, reading campaigns, cool sites for kids, etc...

<http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/~kvander/ChildrenLit/index.html>

Kay Vandergrift's home page: wonderful resource for children's literature!

<http://www.edweek.org/>  
Education Week Online  
Lots of current research on reading.

<http://www.edletter.org/>  
Harvard Education Letter.

## WHAT'S NEW

A very warm welcome to JoAnn Johnson, the new Director of RHODE ISLAND READS, as of July 30, 2001, and the new Administrative Assistant, Rebecca McCrorie.

## FEATURE BOOK

*Patty's Pumpkin Patch*  
by Teri Sloat

Patty's pumpkin patch is a surprisingly busy place all year long. There's plowing and planting in the spring, weeding (and lots of growing!) in the summer with much more than just picking pumpkins in the fall.

For within the patch creepy-crawly, furry, and feathered friends from A – Z are always on the move, keeping Patty company and watching her work.

Perfect for sharing before or after choosing your harvest pumpkin. Teri Sloat's bouncy verse and vibrant, detailed artwork make a visit to a pumpkin patch an outing kids can enjoy any time of year.



*Mother Goose Asks "Why?"* was developed by the Vermont Center for the Book in conjunction with the Montshire Museum of Science and the Vermont Department of Libraries.



Substantial funding is provided by a grant from the National Science Foundation, with local support from the Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services, the Providence Children's Museum, the Museum of Natural History and Planetarium, the Providence Public Library, the Newport Public Library, the Cranston Public Library, and CHILDSPAN.

*This newsletter was created and distributed by the Rhode Island Office of Library & Information Services.*



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Presented in partnership with Rhode Island READS, a project of the Public Education Fund and the Corporation for National and Community Service

## Books for Professionals

From the International Reading Association  
<http://bookstore.reading.org>

**Distinguished Educators on Reading: Contributions that Have Shaped Effective Literacy Instruction**  
( ISBN: 0-87207-269-X)

Take this treasure to your professional library as you delve into the works of 34 leading educators who have shaped the best in literacy instruction for today's children. This volume was compiled by the editors of *The Reading Teacher* from 1989 to 1999.

They selected articles from the journal's Distinguished Educators Series and invited all authors to contribute an autobiography and update their original articles. The result is a rich collection of scholarly thinking that has guided literacy into the 21st century—theories on schooling, learning and reading research, and so much more!!